THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) to (c) The Private/joint Venture companies have so far carried out a 2D seismic survey of 4758.7 LKM, 3D seismic survey of 14 sq. km. and drilled 7 wells in the exploration blocks so far. The amount spent by private/V.J. companies in these blocks till March, 1998 has been 88.68 million US dollor (excluding NOC share). Generally the progress of work has been satisfactory except some delays in the grant of exploration licenses and mining leases by some State Governments. The execution of work under the contracts, including those in the North-Eastern Region, is overseen by a Management Committee which includes representative of Government.

Agreement with Russia on Oil Exploration

1027. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India signed an agreement with Russia on oil exploration;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) when the results of exploration are likely to be expected?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) to (c) Protocols have been signed at the fifth meeting of the Indo-Russian Working Group on Cooperation in Oil and Gas held in Moscow in October, 1998 and during the fifth session of the Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission held in Moscow in November, 1998. The two sides agreed to study the possibilities of joint exploration for hydrocarbon in Russia, India and third countries.

Development of Oil Fields by Private Companies

1028. SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH: SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to award discovered oil fields for development to private companies;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the reasons for which the national oil companies cannot develop the fields themselves?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) Since 1992, Government has signed 17 contracts for development and production of discovered fields. Further 12 discovered fields have been awarded for private participation.

(b) and (c) Some of the reasons for awarding these fields for private participation are:

— The marginal economics of the fields;
— Considerable investment required;
— To augment production;
— To tide over the resource crunch;
— To obtain state of art technology.

Exploration of Oil from Cauvery Basin

1029. SHRI V.P. DURAISAMY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have started the exploration of oil and petroleum products for commercial purpose and domestic purpose from Cauvery basin in Tamil Nadu;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?